



Consul General's Remarks to KOSHER FOOD FEST OPENING

FEBRUARY 24 2008

St. Kilda Synagogue

Good Morning to you all. It a great pleasure for me to be here today. I appreciate being invited to help you all begin this delicious celebration.

In preparation for today's event I have learned more about how relevant kosher food is to us all. I have always had great respect for the importance of Kosher product and produce in the observance of Jewish law, and today I am also very impressed with how active and relevant the Kosher food industry is, in terms of addressing issues of food safety and healthy eating.

In today's world, we all, as consumers, are so conscious about the foods we produce and eat- Kosher food addresses many dietary considerations that many of us require and seek out in the consumer market.

Many of us, as everyday grocery shoppers, may be unaware that, without an independent accreditation such as the kosher process, consumers remains oblivious to the many additives and processing aids used in the manufacture of food items.

I think a good example of this is if one wishes to avoid both meat and dairy, then a food shopper only has to look for the Parve label in the Kosher section of their local grocery store. I understand that here in Melbourne both Safeway and Coles stores maintain a Kosher section, about which I shall now be much more aware. Melbourne's traditional shopping strips of kosher suppliers is much more to this city than just food suppliers, these shopping precincts each play a role in

making Melbourne such a vital and interesting community.

Discerning consumers are increasingly being drawn to the Kosher food market for its safety, accountability and clarity. According to research undertaken by our Commercial Foreign Service, over one million Australian's are consciously buying Kosher product for dietary reasons alone.

With over 10,000 US companies producing kosher foods we hope to see strong growth of these exports to Australia in the future.

I would also like to note that the US is one of the two largest suppliers of kosher food products, along with Israel. According to the CBS Market Watch in 2002, in the US, 75% of all ingredients manufactured in the US are kosher certified. At that time supermarkets were also recording a 6% growth rate in sales of kosher items vs. 2% in the equivalent non-kosher market.

These figures let us all know that the Kosher food industry is a relevant, exciting and progressive industry. Today's event is a great celebration and recognition of this. Lest I delay you any longer from enjoying these tasty samples, thank you for the opportunity to be here and let me join you in noshing!